

SOPHIE ANDERSON

The Thief Who Sang Storms



TEACHING RESOURCE PACK

FOR AGES 9+

SHAPES
for schools



The Thief who Sang Storms

SOPHIE ANDERSON

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Explore Themes of: ✓ Conflict and division ✓ Grief ✓ Kindness ✓ Family and friendship
✓ Empathy ✓ Love ✓ Courage ✓ Community ✓ Working together

Subject Checklist: ✓ Literacy ✓ PSHE ✓ Art

The activities included here are suitable for the classroom or library sessions.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The Island of Morovia is shaped like a broken heart. The humans live on one side of the island, and the alkonosts - the bird-people - live on the other. But it wasn't always this way...

Linnet wishes she could sing magic, like her father, Nightingale - and bring the two sides of her island together again. For her land has been divided by a terrible tragedy, and Linnet has been banished with her father to the deepest swamps, leaving behind her best friends, Hero and Silver.

So when her father is captured, Linnet must be brave and embark on a treacherous journey. Through alligator pools and sinking sands, she finds new friends. Yet without her singing magic, Linnet discovers something even more powerful. Something that could save her father, and heal the broken heart of her island once more...

With themes of grief, trust, love, and that we have more in common than that which divides us, this is a heartfelt book filled with adventure and stunning storytelling from bestselling Sophie Anderson.



The Thief who Sang Storms

SOPHIE ANDERSON

CONTENTS:

Theme 1 – Returning to Spark

Activities: Draw a picture of Spark. Compare Linnet's life before and after the tragedy.

Objectives: Visualise a setting from the story. Understand the impact of events on a character.

Theme 2 – Kindness

Activities: Nominate somebody for a kindness award. Plan three acts of kindness of your own.

Objectives: Recognise the value of kindness. Appreciate that small acts of kindness can have a big impact.

Theme 3 – Understanding and empathy

Activities: Write a letter to Hero.

Objectives: Empathise with a character. Understand a character's motives.

Theme 4 – Togetherness

Activities: Create a symbol of kindness and togetherness to display in your classroom. Take action on an issue you care about.

Objectives: Build a sense of community in the classroom. Recognise that everyone has the power to make a difference.

The Thief who Sang Storms

SOPHIE ANDERSON



BOOK COVER PROMPTS:

1. What do you notice about the front cover?
2. What genre do you think this book might fit within?
3. Can you think of three questions about the book based on the front cover?
4. Does the front cover remind you of any other books you've read?

The Thief who Sang Storms

SOPHIE ANDERSON

THEME 1: Returning to Spark

PRE-READ QUESTION Have a look at the map of Morovia at the front of the book. Can you find Linnet and Nightingale's home in the swamp? Can you find their old hometown of Spark?

EXTRACT 1

In this extract, Linnet is travelling back to Spark...

Whiskers nudges my leg and grunts nervously. I look up and my eyes widen at the sight of Spark ahead. It feels like for ever since I've seen this crescent-moon shaped cluster of brightly coloured square houses, with leafy gardens rising from their flat roofs. The town hugs the curved sweep of soft, golden sand that separates it from the sparkling waters in the bay. Today the waters are pale blue and almost as still as a lake. Morovia must be drifting across one of the shallow, tropical seas of the world. The gulls that usually spend their days screeching and diving are now calm dots on the sand, probably preening in the sunshine.

Something swells in my throat. Perhaps it's the nostalgia Nightingale talks about - the yearning for the happiness of the past. My life in Spark was carefree. I had my parents, our friends, Hero, and long days spent playing on the sand and splashing in the waves. I swallow back the lump in my throat and push my memories away. Right now, to stand a chance of reclaiming any of that, I need to focus on getting into Spark unseen and finding help.

I continue walking, making silent bargains with Fate in my head: *If I get Nightingale back, I won't steal from a courtier's hands ever again, or abandon my father in the night.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Close your eyes and ask someone to read the first paragraph of this extract out loud to you. Can you visualise Spark? Now, open your eyes and describe the image you have in your mind.
- How does Linnet's old hometown of Spark compare to her home in the swamp? Where would you prefer to live?
- Can you describe how Linnet feels when she sees Spark? Underline any words or phrases in the extract that suggest how she feels.
- What does the word 'nostalgia' mean?
- What is the purpose of Linnet's return to Spark?

The Thief who Sang Storms

SOPHIE ANDERSON

Activity 1: Draw a picture of Spark

Draw a picture of Spark using extract 1 to help you.



Based on the story so far, can you think of some words or phrases to describe Linnet's life before Joy sank, and some words to describe her life after Joy sank?

Q. How has Linnet's life changed?

BEFORE

AFTER



The Thief who Sang Storms

SOPHIE ANDERSON

THEME 2: Kindness

EXTRACT 2

In this extract, Linnet is remembering part of the Day of Union before Joy sank...

I always loved this part of the day, but it was extra special this year. The people called to the stage had all been anonymously nominated to receive a seabird feather dipped in gold, as thanks and recognition of an act of kindness they had performed. And Nightingale was onstage, because I'd nominated him for something he'd done.

Violet gave out the golden feathers and described each act of kindness. Some of them were small, simple acts, like carrying a friend's shopping home from the market, bringing a hot drink to a stranger with cold hands, or dropping off a cooked meal to a neighbour having a difficult day. Other acts were generous gifts of money, supplies or voluntary work to people or places that needed them.

Some of the most moving kindnesses were from people who simply stopped to talk to someone who looked lonely, or offered a hug to someone who looked upset, because it was these seemingly small acts that often had the biggest impact.

When Nightingale was given his feather, I welled with pride as Violet described how he'd used his singing magic to soothe a newborn baby in the hospital with stomach ache, then visited the baby on the other side of Spark every evening for five moons, because his songs were the only thing that would soothe the baby to sleep.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why was this golden feather ceremony extra special for Linnet?
- How do you think the audience felt as they watched people receiving their feathers and heard Violet describe their acts of kindness?
- Which kindnesses did Linnet find 'the most moving'?
- Can you think of a time when a small act of kindness has had a big impact on you?
- What act of kindness did Linnet nominate Nightingale for?

The Thief who Sang Storms

SOPHIE ANDERSON

Activity 2: A celebration of kindness

- Who would you nominate for a golden feather? Can you think of someone you know who has shown kindness? It might be a friend, a family member, a well-known person or even a character in a book. Complete the nomination form below describing this person's act of kindness and the impact it had on you or on others.

Golden Feather Nomination Form

I nominate

because

.....

.....

.....

- Read your nomination to your class and listen as other people share theirs. How do you feel as you hear about all these acts of kindness?
- Can you think of 3 small acts of kindness you could do this week?

.....

.....

.....

Remember: even small acts of kindness can have a big impact!

The Thief who Sang Storms

SOPHIE ANDERSON

THEME 3: Understanding and empathy

EXTRACT 3

In this extract, Linnet and her friends are in The Keep...

“For all we know, it might have been singing magic that shipwrecked humans on Morovia thousands of years ago.” Captain Ilya spits out his words and anger flares inside me.

“Why would you suggest something so horrible?” I yell at Captain Ilya. “Alkonosts saved the lives of many of the humans who were shipwrecked here and offered them a home!” But as I’m speaking, I think how I don’t know what caused that shipwreck, and I don’t know what caused the tidal wave that sank *Joy* either. Doubts swirl inside me and I glare at Captain Ilya, realizing that this is what he does - he takes the little doubts that people carry inside them like quiet, unhatched eggs, and he pokes them until they crack, then feeds what’s inside, making it grow into suspicion and hate.

Captain Ilya sneers as he turns away from me and I realize this is all his fault. Hero is just a child, like me, and after she lost her parents she needed comfort. But all she had was Captain Ilya, whispering in her ear, telling her that *Joy* sinking was the fault of alkonosts and that we were dangerous. No wonder Hero has acted this way. Captain Ilya has influenced her more than any singing magic ever could.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Can you underline any words that show how Linnet feels as she listens to Captain Ilya?
- How does Captain Ilya create suspicion and hate?
- How do you feel about Hero at this point in the story?
- What is Hero’s attitude towards the alkonosts?
- Can you empathise with Hero? How do you think she felt after *Joy* sank? Why do you think she acted in the way she did?

The Thief who Sang Storms

SOPHIE ANDERSON

Activity 3: Write a letter to Hero

Imagine you could send a letter to Hero. What would you like to say to her? How might you help her to understand Linnet and the other alkonosts?

Dear Hero....

The Thief who Sang Storms

SOPHIE ANDERSON

THEME 4: Togetherness

Now that you've finished reading *The Thief Who Sang Storms*, it's time to reflect on some of its themes. Have a read of these inspiring quotes from the book:

'Our greatest power is always deep inside us and not in our magic at all.'

Page 291

'Everyone has magic [...] it's just not always singing magic.'

Page 350

'...fear can be overcome by togetherness instead of division.'

Page 388

'I am choosing kindness over everything else.'

Page 400

'Together we can sing magic.'

Author's note

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Which quote is your favourite? (Perhaps you could write out and decorate your favourite quote to display on the wall?)
- Did any parts of the story surprise you?
- What do you think the story shows us about kindness and togetherness?
- Can you make up a sentence using one or more of these words:

Love Courage Together Division Unity Kindness Change

- Many of the characters in the book don't have any singing magic but they still have the power to change their world and the lives of those around them. In what ways can you make a positive difference to the world?

The Thief who Sang Storms

SOPHIE ANDERSON

Activity 4: Create a bird of kindness!

'Kindness, the bird in flight

The star map in the night

Your hands, my feathers strong

Our futures filled with song.'

Page 186

- Everybody in your class will need a copy of the feather template on the following page. (You might like to print these onto coloured paper.)
- Write your name in large letters inside your feather template and cut it out. Your teacher will then ask you to pass your feather to the person sitting to your right.
- Think carefully about the person whose feather you receive. What are this person's skills and what do you admire or appreciate about them? Write one skill or positive characteristic you see in this person inside their feather. For example, you might think they are kind, creative or a good friend. When everyone is ready, pass your feather to your right again.
- Continue until every feather has four or five positive words or phrases written in it then hand your feathers back to their owners.
- What do your classmates appreciate about you? Have they noticed 'powers' that you didn't know you had? How do you feel as you read them?
- As a class, draw a large outline of a bird on a piece of coloured paper. You might like to use the images of the birds on the following page as inspiration. Stick your feathers onto your bird outline. Consider all the wonderful skills and characteristics you have in your classroom. Think how much you can achieve when you work together with kindness!
- Linnet and her friends work together for a better Morovia. What are some of the issues you care about as a class? Perhaps bullying, loneliness or the natural world? How could you work together as a class to begin to make a difference on one of the issues you care about? Perhaps you could record a song for people in your local nursing home, perform a play about friendship in assembly, write poems to encourage people to be kind or speak to your headteacher about creating a nature area?
- Display your bird on the wall as a reminder of kindness, friendship and the power of working together!



The Thief who Sang Storms

SOPHIE ANDERSON

